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Nardolillo Questions Raimondo's Free College Tuition Plan Not Excluding Illegal Immigrants

Tuesday, January 24, 2017

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Representative Robert Nardolillo is expressing concerns with Governor Gina Raimondo's two-year, free college tuition plan because it does not exclude illegal immigrants.

"We already know that Governor Raimondo supports driver's licenses for illegal immigrants, now it looks as though, if this plan passed, Governor Raimondo would be putting all Rhode Island taxpayers on the hook to pay for two years of free college tuition for the children of some 35,000 illegal immigrants currently residing in Rhode Island. As it stands, we are already paying for public education K-12 for illegal immigrants, and now this?" said Nardolillo.

The Plan

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Las week, Governor Raimondo announced an education initiative that wold make the first two years of public higher education tuition-free for Rhode Island high school graduates enrolled at the state's three public colleges. The colleges include the Community College of Rhode Island, the University of Rhode Island and Rhode Island College.



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Nardolillo estimates the cost of supporting the children of some 35,000 illegal immigrants is more than \$200 million.

"At first glance, anyone would agree, the proposal of free college tuition for two years is a great idea, because it would offer financial relief to parents and students. It is also a great motivator to any student discouraged by today's high cost of education. However, especially if we include the cost of paying for two years of college for illegal immigrants, we simply do not have the funds to cover this initiative," Nardolillo said.


He added, "We see this every budget cycle. The sitting Governor releases a proposed budget, which offers all sorts of goodies, which sounds like heaven sent promises, but it's all smoke and mirrors. The budget then goes to the General Assembly which must trim the fat, determining what our state can and cannot pay for. The General Assembly is charged with protecting taxpayers, and is why I am speaking out on this ridiculous proposal. While it sounds great in theory, it is not financially responsible. Governor Raimondo is a huge supporter of giving driver's licenses to illegals and now it appears she wants to give those without proper immigration status two years of college tuition, too."

Editor's Note: A previous version from Nardolillo stated "free college tuition for 35,000 immigrants" - Nardolillo corrected to say "children of."

See the Winners and Losers in Raimondo's Budget Proposal Below

Related Slideshow: Winners and Losers in Raimondo's FY17 Budget Proposal

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Winner

School Infrastructure

An \$80 million appropriation for construction and renovation, including of \$9.1 million for the school building authority.

A \$40 million general obligation bond to renovate and modernize school facilities with a focus on immediate health and safety, and investing in STEAM learning spaces.

A requirement that all schools post their actual budget online.

The Governor continues to address the pressing needs of the state's children and the condition of the schools they attend in her FY17 budget proposal; the public could have the opportunity to follow-suit by approving the general obligation bond in November — or not.



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